THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Steel Authority of India Limited had filed an anti-dumping petition on the ground of dumping of steel plates by Germany, U.K and Italy. The petition was examined in accordance with the Customs Tariff (Identification, Assessment and Collection of Duty or Additional Duty on dumped articles and for determination of Injury) Rules, 1985 and it was found that there was no prima-facie evidence of dumping/injury. The above fact was intimated to the petitioner in March, 1994.

(b) There is no formal machinery for inter-ministerial consultations before import duty concessions are decided upon. However, wherever necessary, the concerned ministry is consulted or its views are taken into account.

(c) Anti-dumping petitions filed are being examined by the Designated Authority in the Ministry of Commerce in accordance with the provisions of Customs Tariff (Identification, Assessment and Collection of Duty or Additional Duty on Dumped Articles and for Determination of Injury) Rules, 1985.

Anti-dumping petitions received by the government are examined under the above Rules and in case of sufficient prima-facie evidence of dumping, injury and casual link between dumping and injury, an investigation is initiated and notified in the official gazette. The importers, exporters, and the government of the exporting countries concerned are informed and advised to make their views. Opportunity is also given to the parties concerned to present their views orally. Provisional findings thereafter are notified according to the Rules and informed to the parties concerned, advising them to make their views known. In the light of facts and information received, the final findings are determined and notified.

India Bangladesh Cooperation in Trade

735. SYED SIBTEY RAZI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether India and Bangladesh desire to further increase industrial, trade and economic cooperation between the two countries;

(b) if so, the details of initiatives to be taken in this regard ;

(c) whether this will also strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries ; and

(d) if so, details thereof and if not, steps to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Both Governments hold frequent mutual consultation in this regard. Possible initiatives could be, inter-alia, extension of preferential trading arrangements within multilateral frameworks, promotion of Joint ventures, further encouragement to business level contacts including mutual participation in trade fairs and exchange of trade delegations, signing of bilateral agreement on mutual promotion and protection of investment, opening of border trade, and extension of transit facilities.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Increased industrial, trade and economic cooperation would result in greater integration of the two economics, thus strengthening bilateral relations.

Estimated production of Tea

736. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) what is the estimated production of tea in the calendar year

1994 and quantity expected to be sold in the domestic market and the quantity expected to be exported;

(b) whether Government intend to export tea to Pakistan also;

(c) if so, the quantity envisaged with details ;

(d) whether it is a fact that tea industry is hit by falling exports and its low prices within the country; and

(e) if so, what steps Government have taken to avert any crisis in the industry ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) According to current indications production of tea during 1994 may reach a level of 750 million kgs. Estimated level of domestic consumption during the year would be around 580 million kgs. and exports of tea during the current calendar year are expected to be at level of around 158 million kgs.

(b) and (c) Indian tea is being exported to Pakistan also. During January to September, 1994, shipment licences for export of 1.36 million kgs. of tea to Pakistan have been issued by the Tea Board.

(d) Higher production of tea during the current year coupled with lower intake of Indian tea by importing countries, has resulted in prices of teas ruling easy at the auctions as compared to last year.

(e) In order to step up exports of Indian tea, discussions have been held with Russian authorities requesting them to source their requirements of tea from India under the debt repayment route. According to the information available, Russian authorities have allocated around US£ 50 million to various importing organisations in that country for import of Indian teas Problem regarding exports tea to Iran on account of delay in opening of Letters of Credit is exported to be resolved.

Other steps taken to boost exports of teas include promotional campaigns through Tea Board's offices abroad. It consists of (i) participation in trade fairs/exhibitions; (ii) media campaign to increase consumer awareness towards various unique characteristics of Indian tea; (iii) media campaign to popularise Indian tea through Tea Board marketing symbol; and (iv) support to various foreign brands containing Indian tea. A part of the expenditure incurred by importers for promotional campaigns is met from Tea Board budget. Tea Board have also undertaken Darjeeling and Assam logo campaign in UK to popularise classic Indian teas. Recently the Brand Promotion Scheme has been revived to give a boost to exports of value added teas.

With the improvement in exports, prices of teas at various auction centres in India are expected to improve.

Review of Laws relating to anti-dumping duties

737. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Goverment are reviewing the laws relating to anti-dumping duties in the context of the final act of Uruguay Round of multilateral trade Organisations ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the cuts in Customs duty and import liberalisation has exposed the domestic industry to intense foreign competition and dumping by foreign suppliers ;